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Internet Grammar Concerns

With new technology comes new jargon, and often it takes years before we can agree on the proper spelling and usage of words that seep into our vocabulary from common usage. The proliferation of words that have sprung up since the development of the Internet is a prime example of this phenomenon. While for some words there are generally-agreed-upon spellings and usages, there are others that are used with less standardization and therefore vary from publication to publication.

Most stylebooks and dictionaries agree that the words "Internet" and "Web" (when referring to the World Wide Web) should always be capitalized because they are proper nouns. There is only one Internet and only one World Wide Web.

However, not everyone agrees on other Internet terminology. According to the *Associated Press (AP) Stylebook*, "Web site" is always two words, but there are others who spell it as "Website," "website," or

Key Terms To Understanding Internet Grammar:

Internet
A global network connecting millions of computers. More than 100 countries are linked into exchanges of data, news and opinions.

World Wide Web
A system of Internet servers that support specially formatted documents.

e-mail
Short for electronic mail, the transmission of messages over

even "web site." Some consider it acceptable still to use "website" only when writing informally.

While the AP stylebook dictates that there is no hyphen in the word "online," others spell the word as "on-line" whether used as an adjective or an adverb.

communications networks. The messages can be notes entered from the keyboard or electronic files stored on disk.

Webster's Dictionary capitalizes the noun form of "E-mail" but uses the lowercase "e-mail" when using the word as a verb. The AP style is to use the lowercase "e-mail" for all instances. In almost all cases where the e is short for the word electronic, you will see the usage of e-. Some examples include e-mail, e-commerce, e-day, e-business, e-learning, and many more electronic words.

Still others spell the word "email" with no hyphen or even the capitalized "Email."

The best strategy an organization or publication can adopt when dealing with Internet jargon is to choose one "house style" and be consistent with that style and follow the guidelines of a specific dictionary or stylebook. For now, until all dictionaries and stylebooks can agree on standardization, all of the spellings and usages are correct. In reality, there may never actually be a standardization of Internet jargon as the nature of the Internet invites a lack of standardization. Anyone with the know-how (or the money to pay someone with the know-how) can run a Web site and spell words any way he or she chooses without regard to editorial consistency.

> **Did You Know...**
> According to the Chicago Manual of Style, one should never write .Www. (www with a capital W) just to honor the beginning of a sentence.

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2005 AP Style Book (Official Web site) ⋛⋚
The 2005 edition of the AP Stylebook and Briefing on Media La

now available in both print and electronic forms.

The Chicago Manual of Style (Official Web site) ≉
The University of Chicago Press is pleased to announce the
publication of the fifteenth edition of The Chicago Manual of
Style, the most extensive revision in twenty years.

Wikipedia: AP Stylebook
The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law,
usually called the AP Stylebook and nicknamed the
"journalist's bible," is the primary guide of style and usage for
most newspapers and news magazines in the United States.
As of 2005, Norm Goldstein has been the editor for several
years. The book is updated annually, usually in June. The
book has about 400 pages in its 2004 edition.

Quick AP Style Reference
This collection of some of the most useful style references
was made by Professor Griff Singer. For complete
references, please consult The Associated Press Stylebook
and Libel Manual.

Wikipedia: The Chicago Manual of Style (CMS)
The Chicago Manual of Style (CMS) is a highly regarded
style guide for American English, dealing with questions of
style, manuscript preparation, and, to a lesser degree,
usage. (Note that in the publications world, style means
punctuation, italicizing, bolding, capitalization, tables and so
forth — not prose style.)

Chicago Manual of Style
Q&A on Internet, Web, and other Post-Watergate Concerns

University of Illinois Grammar Handbook
This Handbook explains and illustrates the basic
grammatical rules concerning parts of speech, phrases,
clauses, sentences and sentence elements, and common
problems of usage.

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